

Amendments to the Claims:

The following listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of the claims in this application.

Listing of the Claims:

Claims 1-10 (Canceled).

Claim 11 (Currently Amended): A process for producing a high-molecular weight aliphatic polyester, which comprises subjecting a ring-opening (co)polymer of glycolide or a mixture containing at least 70% by weight of glycolide and at most 30% by weight of another cyclic monomer to a chain-lengthening reaction with an oxazoline compound having at least two oxazoline ring structures in its molecule to highly increase the molecular weight thereof to the extent that a ratio (Mw_2/Mw_1) of a weight average molecular weight (Mw_2) of the ring-opening (co)polymer after the chain lengthening to a weight average molecular weight (Mw_1) of the ring-opening (co)polymer before the chain lengthening is at least 1.35 ~~1.65 to 10.00~~,

wherein the chain-lengthening reaction is conducted in the presence of the oxazoline compound in a proportion within a range of ~~4~~ 3 to 10 parts by weight per 100 parts by weight of the ring-opening (co)polymer,

wherein the ring-opening (co)polymer before the chain lengthening has a weight average molecular weight of 30,000 to 110,000 and is subjected to the chain-lengthening reaction to produce the high-molecular weight ring-opening (co)polymer, and

wherein the ring-opening (co)polymer and the oxazoline compound are subjected to the chain-lengthening reaction under conditions wherein the reaction temperature is not lower than

the melting temperature of the ring-opening (co)polymer, but not higher than 300°C ~~240°C~~, and the reaction time is 5 to 40 ~~10 to 30~~ minutes, thereby obtaining a high-molecular weight ring-opening (co)polymer having the following properties:

a) the weight average molecular weight (Mw) of the ring-opening (co)polymer after the chain lengthening, whose molecular weight has been increased by the chain-lengthening reaction, is 120,000 to 500,000 ~~181,000 to 500,000~~,

b) a molecular weight distribution (Mw/Mn) represented by a ratio of a weight average molecular weight (Mw) of the ring-opening (co)polymer, whose molecular weight has been highly increased by the chain-lengthening reaction, to a number average molecular weight (Mn) thereof is at least 1.90 ~~2.30 to 4.50~~, and

c) a difference ($T_2 - T_1$) between a 1%-weight loss-starting temperature T_2 on heating of the ring-opening (co)polymer after the chain lengthening and a 1%-weight loss-starting temperature T_1 on heating of the ring-opening (co)polymer before the chain lengthening is at least 3°C ~~20°C to 30°C~~, wherein the 1%-weight loss-starting temperature T_2 on heating of the ring-opening (co)polymer after the chain lengthening is at least 233°C ~~252°C~~.

Claims 12-25 (Canceled).

Claim 26 (Currently Amended): The production process according to claim 11, wherein the chain-lengthening reaction is conducted in the presence of the oxazoline compound in a

proportion within a range of ± 3 to 5 parts by weight per 100 parts by weight of the ring-opening (co)polymer.

Claim 27 (Canceled).

Claim 28 (Previously Presented): The production process according to claim 11, wherein the oxazoline compound having at least two oxazoline ring structures in its molecule is 2,2'-m-phenylene-bis(2-oxazoline).

Claims 29-31 (Canceled).

Claim 32 (New): The production process according to claim 11, wherein the ratio (Mw_2/Mw_1) of a weight average molecular weight (Mw_2) of the ring-opening (co)polymer after the chain lengthening to a weight average molecular weight (Mw_1) of the ring-opening (co)polymer before the chain lengthening is 1.65 to 10.00.

Claim 33 (New): The production process according to claim 11, wherein the ring-opening (co)polymer and the oxazoline compound are subjected to the chain-lengthening reaction under conditions wherein the reaction temperature is not lower than the melting temperature of the ring-opening (co)polymer, but not higher than 240°C, and the reaction time is 10 to 30 minutes.

Claim 34 (New): The production process according to claim 11, wherein the weight average molecular weight (M_w) of the ring-opening (co)polymer after the chain lengthening, whose molecular weight has been increased by the chain-lengthening reaction, is 181,000 to 500,000.

Claim 35 (New): The production process according to claim 11, wherein the molecular weight distribution (M_w/M_n) represented by a ratio of a weight average molecular weight (M_w) of the ring-opening (co)polymer, whose molecular weight has been highly increased by the chain-lengthening reaction, to a number average molecular weight (M_n) thereof is 2.30 to 4.50.

Claim 36 (New): The production process according to claim 11, wherein the difference ($T_2 - T_1$) between a 1%-weight loss-starting temperature T_2 on heating of the ring-opening (co)polymer after the chain lengthening and a 1%-weight loss-starting temperature T_1 on heating of the ring-opening (co)polymer before the chain lengthening is 20°C to 30°C, wherein the 1%-weight loss-starting temperature T_2 on heating of the ring-opening (co)polymer after the chain lengthening is at least 252°C.

Claim 37 (New): The production process according to claim 11, wherein the ratio (M_{w2}/M_{w1}) of a weight average molecular weight (M_{w2}) of the ring-opening (co)polymer after the chain lengthening to a weight average molecular weight (M_{w1}) of the ring-opening (co)polymer before the chain lengthening is 1.65 to 10.00; wherein the ring-opening (co)polymer

and the oxazoline compound are subjected to the chain-lengthening reaction under conditions wherein the reaction temperature is not lower than the melting temperature of the ring-opening (co)polymer, but not higher than 240°C, and the reaction time is 10 to 30 minutes; wherein the weight average molecular weight (Mw) of the ring-opening (co)polymer after the chain lengthening, whose molecular weight has been increased by the chain-lengthening reaction, is 181,000 to 500,000; wherein the molecular weight distribution (Mw/Mn) represented by a ratio of a weight average molecular weight (Mw) of the ring-opening (co)polymer, whose molecular weight has been highly increased by the chain-lengthening reaction, to a number average molecular weight (Mn) thereof is 2.30 to 4.50; and wherein the difference ($T_2 - T_1$) between a 1%-weight loss-starting temperature T_2 on heating of the ring-opening (co)polymer after the chain lengthening and a 1%-weight loss-starting temperature T_1 on heating of the ring-opening (co)polymer before the chain lengthening is 20°C to 30°C, wherein the 1%-weight loss-starting temperature T_2 on heating of the ring-opening (co)polymer after the chain lengthening is at least 252°C.